

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01

COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 SAM-01 OES-03

SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-03 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

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R 111310Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9313

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ENRG, PROP, BU

SUBJECT: RESTRICTIONS ON GASOLINE FOR PRIVATE VEHICLES LIFTED

REF: SOFIA 1643 (1973)

1. IN SURPRISE AND UNEXPLAINED MOVE GOB MARCH 5 LIFTED RESTRICTIONS ON SUPPLY OF GASOLINE FOR PRIVATELY OWNED MOTOR VEHICLES. PRIVATE VEHICLE OWNERS MAY NOW PURCHASE UNLIMITED QUANTITIES OF COUPONS AT RATES RANGING FROM 26 TO 35 STOTINKIS PER LITER DEPENDING ON GRADE OF GASOLINE. UNDER PREVIOUS SYSTEM IN EFFECT SINCE DECEMBER 1973, OWNERS COULD PURCHASE COUPONS FOR 40 LITERS PER MONTH AT PRICES GIVEN ABOVE, BUT COULD PURCHASE ADDITIONAL COUPONS AT DOUBLE THE PRICE.

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2. NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION EXISTS FOR BULGARIAN BRAVADO

FLYING IN THE FACE OF CURRENT PRACTICES IN MOST OTHER COUNTRIES OF WORLD AS WELL REPORTED INCREASE IN PRICE OF SOVIET PETROLEUM EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1975. THERE HAS HOWEVER BEEN NO PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THAT PRICE INCREASE HERE.

3. GASOLINE PRICE EQUIVALENT TO \$1.50 (AT CURRENT TOURIST EXCHANGE RATE OF \$1.00 - L1.20) PER GALLON FOR SUPER STILL UNLIKELY TO ENCOURAGE EXTRAVAGANT USE OF GASOLINE AND NUMBER OF PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES IS SMALL. ALSO, PREVIOUS RESTRICTIONS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN WHOLLY EFFECTIVE, BUT HARD EVIDENCE IS LACKING ON THAT POINT. OBVIOUS CONCLUSION (WHICH GOB PERHAPS WANTS DRAWN) IS THAT BULGARIA AT PRESENT IS CONFIDENT OF ADEQUACY OF ITS PETROLEUM SOURCES AND SUPPLIES AND ITS ABILITY TO PAY BILL. TO DATE NO EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO USE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. IN FACT, PRESS HAS CARRIED ONLY BRIEFEST ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE.

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Message Attributes

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